

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06

OPIC-03 EB-07 IO-11 AF-06 /086 W

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P R 151725Z MAR 76

FM AMEMBASSY LISBON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6367

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MADRID

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMCONSUL OPORTO

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMCONSUL PONTA DELGADA

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 LISBON 1665

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PO

SUBJ: ELECTIONS: MEETING OF EUROPEAN SOCIALISTS CAPS

WEEKEND CAMPAIGN ACTIVITIES

REF: OPORTO 0107 (DTG 141645Z MAR 76)

SUMMARY: MAR 13-14 PS-SPONSORED MEETING OF EUROPEAN SOCIALIST LEADERS IN OPORTO HIGHLIGHTED HEAVY WEEKEND OF CAMPAIGNING. IN OPORTO, PS LEADER SOARES MADE CLEAREST PUBLIC STATEMENT TO DATE OF HIS DEDICATION TO EUROPE. DESPITE EFFORTS OF SA CARNEIRO AND POPULAR DEMOCRATS TO DOWNPLAY SIGNIFICANCE OF OPROTO GATHERING, MEETING HAS GIVEN SOCIALISTS' CAMPAIGN AN IMPORTANT BUT CONTROVERSIAL BOOST. PPD ATTACKS TOOK THE SHINE OFF THE SOCIALIST EVENT AND MANAGED TO BLOCK THE PRIME MINISTER FROM ATTENDING. AT SAME TIME DEFENSIVE POSTURE OF PPD DID NOT HELP ITS IMAGE.

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END SUMMARY.

1. SOCIALISTS MEET IN OPORTO: A BLUE-RIBBON DELEGATION OF EUROPEAN SOCIALIST LEADERS GATHERED IN OPORTO MAR 13-14 TO EXPRESS SUPPORT FOR THE PORTUGUESE SOCIALIST PARTY (PS). THE VISITING SOCIALISTS, LED BY WILLY BRANDT IN HIS CAPACITY AS PRESIDENT OF THE SOCIALIST INTERNATIONAL'S COMMITTEE FOR SOLIDARITY WITH PORTUGAL, INCLUDED PALME OF SWEDEN; JOOP DEN UYL OF THE NETHERLANDS; NORDLI OF NORWAY; KREISKY OF AUSTRIA; MITTERAND OF FRANCE; DE MARTINO OF ITALY; AND FILIPE GONZALEZ OF SPAIN. WILSON OF GREAT BRITAIN SENT WARM MESSAGE OF SUPPORT.

2. SOARES'S SPEECH: HIGHLIGHT OF MEETING WAS INAUGURAL ADDRESS BY PORTUGUESE SOCIALIST LEADER MARIO SOARES. MAJOR POINTS INCLUDED:

-- FOCUS ON EUROPE: SOCIALISM CANNOT BE BUILT IN PORTUGAL IN OPPOSITION TO THE COUNTRY'S ESSENTIALLY EUROPEAN ORIENTATION; THE PORTUGUESE ARE EUROPEANS AND WANT TO PARTICIPATE ACTIVELY IN THE CONSTRUCTION OF EUROPE,

-- EC RELATIONS: WITH APPROACHING NORMALIZATION OF DEMOCRATIC STRUCTURE IN PORTUGAL, THE NECESSITY FOR AN IN-DEPTH STUDY OF GOP POLICY TOWARD THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY BECOMES EVEN MORE IMPERATIVE.

-- MORE AID NEEDED: PORTUGAL MUST HONOR THE OBLIGATIONS IT HAS ASSUMED. BUT EXISTING ECONOMIC SITUATION MUST BE EXAMINED WITH VIEW TO PROVIDING INCREASED BENEFITS TO PORTUGAL DURING ITS TIME OF GREATEST NEED. SPECIFIC PROBLEM AREAS CITED BY SOARES INCLUDED: TEXTILES; WINE; PAPER AND WOOD PULP; FISHERIES, TOMATO PASTE; TERMS OF ACCESS TO EEC AND GENERAL ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE. SOARES MADE A SPECIFIC APPEAL FOR HIS COLLEAGUES TO REVIEW RESTRICTIVE IMMIGRATION PROVISIONS.

-- RELATIONS WITH EX-COLONIES: THERE IS NO FUNDAMENTAL INCONSISTENCY BETWEEN PORTUGAL'S EUROPEAN ORIENTATION AND ITS ACTING AS A "PRIVILEGED INTERMEDIARY" BETWEEN EUROPE AND AFRICA. PORTUGAL'S RELATIONS WITH EUROPE
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AND AFRICA AND THE "THIRD WORLD" IN GENERAL HAVE BEEN AND WILL CONTINUE TO BE COMPLEMENTARY.

3. SOARES ATTACKS SA CARNEIRO: SOARES CHOSE OPORTO MEETING TO LEVEL STRONGEST ATTACKS OF THE CAMPAIGN TO DATE AGAINST PPD LEADER SA CARNEIRO. SOARES CHARGED: "WHILE WE WERE IN THE JAILS AND THESE MEN (REFERRING TO EUROPEAN SOCIALISTS) SUPPORTED OUR STRUGGLE, SA CARNEIRO

MADE AGREEMENTS WITH MARCELO CAETANO." REFERRING SPECIFICALLY TO SA CARNEIRO'S ALLEGATIONS THAT THE OPORTO MEETING WAS INTERFERENCE IN PORTUGAL'S INTERNAL AFFAIRS, SOARES SAID THE PS WOULD NOT OBJECT TO THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS OR EVEN THE COMMUNISTS INVITING THEIR EUROPEAN COLLEAGUES TO PORTUGAL TO EXPRESS SOLIDARITY WITH THE EFFORT TO BUILD SOCIALISM. SA CARNEIRO'S PROBLEM, SOARES CONTINUED, WAS THAT THE PPD LEADER HAD NO ONE TO INVITE. HE WAS LIKE A MAN BETWEEN TWO CHAIRS WITH NO PLACE TO SIT, NUDGING WITH HIS ELBOWS BOTH TO THE LEFT AND RIGHT. BUT, SOARES CONCLUDED, SA CARNEIRO WOULD BE UNSUCCESSFUL AND IN THE END WOULD HAVE TO "SIT ON THE GROUND."

4. PPD DISSIDENTS ATTEND: SEVERAL PROMINENT SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC MOVEMENT MEMBERS (EX-PPD, NOW MSD), INCLUDING EMIDIO GUERREIRO AND JOSE AUGUSTO SEABRA, ATTENDED THE PS OPORTO RALLY ON MAR 13. GUERREIRO DESCRIBED HIS PRESENCE TO NEWSMEN AS "PERFECTLY NATURAL" AT A MEETING OF SUCH IMPORTANCE FOR THE FUTURE OF THE COUNTRY. GUERREIRO WAS LATER INVITED BY PS SPONSORS TO SIT ON THE PLATFORM WITH VISITING SOCIALIST LEADERS.

5. PM DECIDES NOT TO ATTEND: THE POPULAR DEMOCRATS STAGED A COUNTER DEMONSTRATION IN OPORTO MAR 13 SEVERAL HOURS BEFORE THE PS-SPONSORED EVENT. THE PPD DREW 15-20,000, WELL BELOW THE ESTIMATED 25,000 WHICH JAMMED THE CRYSTAL PALACE TO APPLAUD THE SOCIALISTS (REFTEL). PPD PRESSURES HAD EARLIER CAUSED PRIME MINISTER AZEVEDO TO CANCEL PLANS TO ATTEND MAR 14 DINNER IN HONOR OF VISITING SOCIALISTS. AZEVEDO WILL INSTEAD RECEIVE MOST OF VISITORS INDIVIDUALLY IN LISBON ON MAR 15.

6. CDS RALLY IN ALENTEJO: THE RESURGENT CENTER DEMOCRATS
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TOOK THEIR CAMPAIGN TO THE ALENTEJO ON MAR 14, DRAWING 10-15,000 AT A MAJOR RALLY IN ELVAS NEAR THE SPANISH BORDER. MANY OF THE CDS SUPPORTERS CAME FROM LISBON AND OTHER URBAN CENTERS. AN EMBASSY OFFICER ON THE SCENE

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NOTED EXTENSIVE SECURITY PRECAUTIONS. NATIONAL GUARD DETACHMENTS WERE PRESENT AT ALL MAJOR INTERSECTIONS ON THE ROUTE NORTH FROM LISBON TO ELVAS. TROOPS IN FULL BATTLE GEAR FROM THE INFANTRY REGIMENT IN NEARBY ESTREMOZ PATROLLED THE HIGHWAY SOUTH OF ELVAS IN AN OBVIOUS SHOW OF FORCE. LTC FIRMINO MIGUEL, SPECIAL ADVISOR TO ARMY CHIEF OF STAFF, TOLD DATT THAT HE WAS DELIGHTED WITH OUTCOME AND ESPECIALLY WITH FACT THAT PROTECTION TURNED OUT NOT TO BE NEEDED.

7. PCP VIEWS ELECTIONS: OVER 800 DELEGATES ATTENDED MAR 14 PORTUGUESE COMMUNIST PARTY NATIONAL CONFERENCE IN LISBON. HIGH POINT OF CONFERENCE, CALLED TO APPROVE ELECTION STRATEGY, WAS ADDRESS BY SEC GEN ALVARO CUNHAL, WHO MADE FOLLOWING POINTS:

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-- SHOULD "REACTIONARY" PARTIES (READ PPD, CDS, PPM, AND PDC) GAIN CONTROL OF LEGISLATURE IN ELECTIONS, THEY WOULD QUICKLY RESTORE "DICTATORSHIP" TO PORTUGAL. THIS MUST BE PREVENTED.
-- SIMPLY DEFEATING RIGHT IN ELECTIONS, IS INSUFFICIENT.
LEFTIST MAJORITY, UPON WHICH GOVERNMENT OF LEFT CAN BE

FORMED, MUST BE ACHIEVED. HOWEVER, PC CAREFULLY EXCLUDED FROM THE LEFT THOSE FAR LEFT PARTIES SUCH AS THE MRPP, AOC, AND PCP-ML WHICH HAVE CONSISTENTLY OPPOSED THE PCP.

-- NO PARTY CAN HOPE TO GAIN ABSOLUTE MAJORITY IN ELECTION. ELECTIONS WILL DETERMINE WHETHER ENSUING COALITION WILL BE OF RIGHT OR OF LEFT. SOCIALISTS' BOASTS THAT THEY WILL BE ABLE TO GOVERN ALONE ARE "ELECTIONEERING."

-- AMBIGUITY SHOWN BY PS LEADERSHIP IN REFUSING TO DISCUSS POST-ELECTION ALLIANCES MAKES VOTE FOR SOCIALISTS UNSAFE; THEY MIGHT OPT FOR A COALITION WITH RIGHT-WING PARTY.

-- STRONG PCP VOTE, THEREFORE, WILL BE OF GREAT IMPORTANCE IN PREVENTING THE CONSOLIDATION OF A PS-PPD ALLIANCE AND IN FACILITATING PS-PCP COALITION.

8. MDP A MOVEMENT: THE LEADERSHIP OF FELLOW-TRAVELING PORTUGUESE DEMOCRATIC MOVEMENT VOTED MAR 13 TO ABANDON ITS STATUS AS A POLITICAL PARTY FOR THAT OF A "MOVEMENT." ONLY POLITICAL PARTIES CAN COMPETE IN ELECTIONS. MDP SPOKESMEN ANNOUNCING DECISION SAID THAT MOVEMENT WOULD ACTIVELY SUPPORT SUCH "PROGRESSIVE" PARTIES AS PCP AND PS IN THIS YEAR'S ELECTIONS, DESPITE "RIGHTEST POLICIES" OF LATTER'S LEADERSHIP. MDP POLLED 233,362 VOTES AND ELECTED 5 DEPUTIES IN THE 1975 ELECTIONS.

9. COMMENT: THE GATHERING OF EUROPEAN SOCIALISTS IN OPORTO WAS A MAJOR POLITICAL EVENT. IT WITNESSED THE CLEAREST PUBLIC STATEMENT TO DATE OF SOARES'S DEDICATION TO EUROPE. THE AGGRESSIVE EFFORTS OF THE PPD AND SA CARNEIRO TO COUNTER THE POLITICAL IMPACT OF THE OPORTO MEETING DID NOT FULLY SUCCEED AND THE PPD FOUND ITSELF IN A DEFENSIVE DAMAGE-LIMITING POSTURE, DESPITE ITS SUCCESS IN BLOCKING PINHEIRO DE AZEVEDO'S PARTICIPATION. ON THE OTHER HAND, THE PS WHILE ACHIEVING MANY OF ITS OBJECTIVES, HAD MUCH OF THE SHINE KNOCKED OFF BY THE PPD COUNTERATTACK.

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10. THE CDS FORAY INTO THE ALENTEJO IS ANOTHER FIRST FOR THE INCREASINGLY SELF-CONFIDENT CENTER DEMOCRATS. ADDED TO THE PARTY'S EARLIER SUCCESS IN ITS INITIAL EFFORT IN LISBON, THE CDS IS CONTINUING TO PICK UP MOMENTUM AND SUPPORTERS.

11. THE COMMUNIST POSTURE REMAINS CAUTIOUS, PUNCTUATED BY OCCASIONAL PROBING IN THE LABOR SECTOR. PCP STRATEGY OF PORTRAYING ELECTIONS AS SIMPLE CHOICE BETWEEN LEFT AND RIGHT IS DESIGNED TO KEEP PRESSURE ON PS LEADERSHIP TO MAKE CLEAR COMMITMENT TO LEFT, THUS, COMMUNISTS HOPE, OPENING UP THE WAY FOR POST ELECTION PS-PCP COOPERATION.

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